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SUBJECT: MIDTERM ELECTIONS SNAPSHOT: SOME UPS AND DOWNS FOR
THE SMALL PARTIES

REF: A. MEXICO 1683
[1](#)B. MEXICO 1667
[1](#)C. MEXICO 1461
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[1](#)E. 08 MEXICO 3670

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: Patchy alliances may be the key factor to keeping afloat at least three of the five small parties, disadvantaged by the 2007 electoral reform, after the upcoming midterm elections July 5 in Mexico. The Green Party (PVEM) polls the highest, capturing attention by advocating a return to the death penalty and maintaining its alliance with the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in a number of Congressional districts. Likewise, the coalition formed late last year between the far-left Labor Party (PT) and center-left Convergencia, supported by Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO), may keep those parties accredited after the elections. The other two small parties, the Social Democratic Party (PSD) and Nueva Alianza, are in danger of not reaching the two percent of the vote necessary to maintain their registration according to the most recent polls. End Summary.

Midterm Election by the Numbers

[1](#)2. (SBU) Several of the small parties have strengthened their position in recent months, according to a nationwide poll conducted in late May by the daily La Reforma:

PRI:	37%
PAN:	31%
PRD:	16%
Green Party:	6%
PT:	4%
Convergencia:	3%
Nueva Alianza:	2%
PSD:	1%

The Green Party (PVEM)

[1](#)3. (SBU) Of the five small parties, the Green Party of Mexico (PVEM) continues to poll the highest nationwide. PVEM members have positioned themselves between the other four small parties and, in their view, the discredited three large parties as Mexico's only "medium-sized" party, boldly asserting it aspires to overtake the PRD as Mexico's third political force. Aside from its environmentally oriented platform, promise to revamp public education and boost public

health programs, the party is best identified with its controversial stance on re-instating the death penalty (which resulted in its ejection from the worldwide coalition of green parties). This platform plank is part of a package of proposed security reforms, such as boosting the federal government's anti-kidnapping resources, which hit several hot buttons in Mexico. Despite the fact that PVEM's proposals have been variously attacked as unworkable, fiscally non-viable and a draconian step backwards by the other parties, academics and human rights activists, the modest gains PVEM has registered in recent surveys indicate that its campaign strategy is showing some results.

¶4. (SBU) The party will participate in 63 of the 300 Congressional districts with the PRI and hopes to pull in nine to ten percent of the vote nationwide and increase its representation in the Chamber of Deputies. Green Party member Jesus Sesma, wrapping up his term as a Federal Deputy, confided to Poloff that the new electoral reforms have hampered his party's efforts to appeal to voters, citing its meager share of the media time allocated by the Federal Electoral Institute to the parties. PVEM's share amounts to one fifth of that of PAN, he complained. Nonetheless, he thought the Green Party is the only small party likely to secure one or possibly two directly elected representatives.

Labor Party (PT)

¶5. (SBU) The far-left Labor Party (PT) labels itself as the last remaining Marxist-Leninist party in Mexico. While

MEXICO 00001758 002 OF 003

cynics assert that the party is more opportunistic than ideologically committed, one of its founders and two-time Federal Deputy, Ricardo Cantu, demonstrated ample conviction in a recent conversation with Poloff. Cantu claimed a perfect fit in the current alliance between the moderate, social democratic Convergencia and communist-oriented PT, both of which agree that government institutions in Mexico are not working and that the state must play a dominant role in managing the economy because the free market is not advancing the common good.

¶6. (SBU) Despite the well-publicized break with the PRD last fall, PT is actually allying with the PRD in several local elections in Mexico City, teaming up in races for seven borough assembly seats. Many of these PT candidates in Mexico City are using a picture of AMLO in their campaign ads. The strategy has some voters confused. While Cantu credits AMLO for getting many PRD voters to opt for PT (14% in Mexico City according to La Reforma's poll), he conceded that some from the PT have split to join the PRD. (That party's president told the Charge' in March that it had mounted a concerted effort to attract PT members.)

¶7. (SBU) PT's image may be undermined by the current controversy surrounding its Senate leader, Ricardo Monreal, whose family stands accused of having ties to narco-traffickers in the state of Zacatecas. Monreal only recently returned to the Senate after a leave of absence and is being hammered by political competitors on the left, who also have implied his party's funding (and AMLO's political movement) benefit from shady financing.

Convergencia

¶8. (SBU) Although its recent poll numbers are up from January, many observers continue to believe that neither Convergencia's alliance with PT, nor the support being provided by AMLO, is paying dividends. Most believe that even if it captures the two percent of the national vote it needs to maintain its accreditation and public funding as a party, it will barely survive in the Chamber of Deputies with a few proportional representation members. An estimated

10,000 rank and file PRD members defected and signed up with Convergencia late last year after the decision was made not to align with PRD. However, the Citizen Renovation Group (RECI) faction of Convergencia then broke ranks and affiliated with PRD on March 1. According to leader of faction, Jose de Jesus Paredes Flores, Convergencia was "losing touch with the populace," citing a lack of commitment to a results-oriented platform.

Social Democratic Party (PSD)

¶9. (SBU) The tiny Social Democratic Party (PSD) supports a mix of measures designed to appeal to "progressive" Mexicans: legalized abortion and drugs, education reform, expanded access to the internet and gay rights. The party has the only openly gay candidate in the elections, Miguel Galan, running for mayor of Guadalajara. PSD also promises to create more jobs and improve public safety by improving the police and judicial systems. However, embittered by having been jettisoned by the PRD late last year, PSD has been lashing out widely at other leftist parties in the hopes of attracting their voters. In addition to making allegations against PT Senator Monreal, PSD President Diaz Cuervo publicly called the PRD nothing more than a recycled PRI party run by bosses who were formerly from that party. He announced he would seek a federal investigation into how ex-presidential candidate AMLO had been financing his political movement since 2006, alluding to the widespread rumor that the movement was subsidized by Mexico City government funds. Without an alliance with a larger party, the PSD, by many accounts, is this election's most vulnerable party, in danger of disappearing altogether after the July vote. At the very least, it will lose seats in the the Chamber of Deputies.

Nueva Alianza (PANAL)

MEXICO 00001758 003 OF 003

¶10. (SBU) Nueva Alianza is also in danger of falling below the two percent minimum it needs to maintain its accreditation. The party continues to make education its top issue and has typically drawn much of its support from teachers. It has formed alliances with the PAN in the past, but this year negotiations failed on a national scale. Nueva Alianza cited internal conflicts within the PAN and a lack of commitment on education reform, while the PAN was concerned about the role of National Teachers Union leader Elba Esther Gordillo. The highly divisive Gordillo was instrumental in helping found Nueva Alianza in 2005. Last year, she supported President Calderon's controversial Alliance for Quality Education, which subjects teachers to tougher testing and ends the practice of teachers' selling or bequeathing their positions upon retirement. One of the reasons Nueva Alianza is doing poorly in the polls is because of its relationship to Gordillo. Widespread protests side-tracked the proposal and undermined Gordillo's standing among teachers, undoubtedly impacting the performance of Nueva Alianza.

¶11. (SBU) Comment: The new electoral law, particularly its disincentives to forming electoral coalitions between the large and small parties (reftel), has accentuated the weaknesses of the latter. At least two will not likely survive the upcoming electoral test. End Comment.

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